

MESSAGE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

~~SECRET~~
PRIORITY

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FROM: CGUSCOB BERLIN GERMANY
TO: DA WASH DC, CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GERMANY
INFO: USCINCEUR PARIS FRANCE, USAMBASSADOR BONN GERMANY

NR: 150035Z

DECLASSIFIED BY: NOV 58

DA PASS TO DEFENSE AND STATE JCS DECLASSIFICATION BRANCH

Ref Nr: Unnr

DATE: 5 April 1979

1. Three US military vehicles and three US military personnel were detained at 1400 hours at Babelsberg (Berlin) checkpoint. Two were covered trucks and one a jeep with covered trailer. Berlin command not notified of detention until approx 1600 hours. Soviets demanded right of inspection and not receiving it, refused to permit vehicles to proceed to Helmstedt or return to Berlin. Latter course of action unprecedented. Efforts were made to release these vehicles by visit of Provost Marshal officer to checkpoint demanding that they be released. Answer by Soviet officer (a new Lt Col) at checkpoint was that they will remain "until hell freezes over", insisting trucks must be inspected. Lt Col said he would not have to look himself but his Lt must at least peep under covers.

2. Strong protest was sent to Karlshorst and received by Soviets at 1925 (reported Bonn and Heidelberg). Provost Marshal officer returned to Soviet checkpoint with strong verbal protest and was told that neither vehicles nor personnel would be released. Mr Findley Burns, political advisor, ~~acting Asst Chief of Mission, Berlin~~ was dispatched to Karlshorst to inform Soviet political advisor that we view this situation intolerable and demand that vehicles be released immediately. It is obvious this was a planned incident to check our reaction. Mr Trimble, who is in Berlin, and Mr Burns agreed with US Commander, Berlin that it would be a serious blow to US prestige particularly at this time if personnel and vehicles were permitted to remain in Soviet custody.

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MESSAGE

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NR: 151230Z

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answer to Burns was non-committal or in negative plan of US Commander, Berlin, was to go in and extricate personnel and vehicles with armed military forces.

3. This plan was transmitted to CINCUSAREUR for approval and forces sufficient to accomplish mission were alerted in position and ready to move. While message to CINCUSAREUR was being transmitted, word was received by US Commander Berlin, that trucks and personnel had been released by the Soviets.

4. At conclusion of Burns protest, he was notified that order to release trucks had been given shortly before. MP officer returning to checkpoint at this time, with food for drivers, told by Soviet Lt Col that he could take vehicles back to Berlin.

5. Additional pertinent information:

A. Soviets in Karlshorst were on apparent alert and keeping up with this situation minute by minute.

B. Babolsberg checkpoint is approximately 1 mile inside Soviet Zone of Germany.

C. There is no record of Soviets holding personnel at initial point of entry and not permitting them to return to point of origin.

6. This message regraded UNCLASSIFIED 14 November 1981.

ACTION: DCSOP

INFO: OCS, OSA, TAG, CLL, CI, ACSI, ACSI (STATE)

DA IN 169899

(15 Nov 58)

PER/11

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